

North Sixth Street (Houses)
Bounded on the south by Maclay Street,
on the east by Jefferson Street, on the
north by Radnor Street, on the west by
Bersinger Alley
Harrisburg
Dauphin County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5204

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NORTH SIXTH STREET
(Houses)

HABS No. PA-5204

Descriptive Information

The North Sixth Street Historic District, a National Register Eligible District, located in Uptown Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, encompasses the North Sixth Street corridor and portions of the adjacent side streets from Maclay Street to Radnor Street. The area is roughly bounded on the south by Maclay Street, on the east by Jefferson Street, on the north by Radnor Street, and on the west by Bersinger Alley, which is just east of North Fifth Street. (See map of district).

North Sixth Street, the district's principal traffic artery and traditional retail service corridor, bisects the North Sixth Street Neighborhood in an east/westly direction. The adjacent residential streets, maintain the classic grid pattern, representing an expansion of the older City further south, occurring in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Physically, this area is experiencing marked deterioration. It is an area of contrasts, from the Sixth Street commercial corridor, to the surprisingly intact adjacent residential blocks. The traditional rhythm of the streetscape is often disturbed on Sixth Street but continues to prevail on side streets. Demolition and modern intrusions are chiefly responsible for the lack of streetscape harmony.

Within the North Sixth Street Historic District, brick is the primary building material. However, individual frame structures and frame rows can also be found. Street patterns consist of two, two and a half and three story attached and semi-detached rows, with three story row housing being most pervasive. Notwithstanding, detached dwellings are found sporadically located throughout the district. Most buildings are one and two family structures, with few multi-family buildings to be found within the area. Many of the area's buildings are also characterized by single story front porches at zero set backs or with small front yards.

Noteworthy buildings in the North Sixth Street District include the Camp Curtin Fire Station, which is located on the corner of North Sixth Street and Reel's Lane and which is on the National Register of Historic Places, the Camp Curtin Memorial M.E. Church, located at North Sixth Street and Wharton Alley, the Sixth Street Evangelical United Brethren Church, located at 2337 North Sixth Street, the Evangelical Congregational Church, located at North Sixth and Radnor Streets, the Dauphin Deposit Bank Building located on the western corner of Maclay and North 6th

Street, the Brotherhood Building located on the eastern corner of Maclay and N. 6th Street, the Floyd Colder Clemson House located at 2152 N. 6th Street and the Leftwich Funeral Home located at 2439 N. 6th Street. The Camp Curtin Junior High School, formerly located at Sixth and Forrest Street, was built circa 1905 and demolished in the 1950's.

Also significant, Camp Curtin Park and Monument, located at North Sixth and Woodbine Streets, commemorates the site of Camp Curtin, a major Union army camp during the Civil War. The park is the smallest state park within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The architectural styles in the North Sixth Street Historic District are all of the Victorian era, although enclaves of Federal style houses are found here as well. Vernacular and academic forms of Second Empire, Italianate, Eastlake, Flemish Gable, Gothic, and Carpenter Gothic are all well represented here.

Architectural detail is highly decorative in nature. The Carpenter Gothic woodwork shingled roofs, bracketed cornices and doorways, and Eastlake influence porch details are all indicative of superior workmanship. Striking wrought iron window guards and fences are also visible here.

Although the traditional Victorian commercial corridor of North Sixth Street is still in evidence, vacant lots, abandoned buildings and modern intrusions mar the streetscape. The side streets are much more intact than the main traffic artery of North Sixth Street.

Due to the architecturally intact housing on the side streets and the historical significance of the area, the area has definite Historic District potential. Forrest, Woodbine, Camp, Emerald, Curtin, Ross, Oxford, Agate and Jefferson Streets all have Historic District potential, as do the 2100-2500 blocks of North Sixth Street. This area of Sixth Street is the best remaining example of the mixed commercial and residential Victorian development that once characterized the entire street. The side streets offer the fewest intrusions upon the historic fabric of this area.

Historical Information

The North Sixth Street Historic District has a most interesting settlement pattern. Sixth Street was originally known as Ridge Road and was a major thoroughfare northward from the early City. Ridge Road developed in a northward linear pattern as a Victorian commercial corridor and later became an important City trolley line. Because Ridge Avenue was on high ground it developed earlier than the territory farther to the west along the Susquehanna River, which generally developed from 1915-1935. The latter was originally marshland susceptible to flooding and was for the most part undevelopable until improved technology allowed for substantial filling and grading in the 20th Century.

The majority of the district was annexed to the City in 1895, incorporating the small village known as Schuylkill, which had been laid out in 1884 at Fifth and Woodbine Streets. The ground north of Maclay Street was used first in 1857 as the Dauphin County Fairgrounds. From 1861-1865 the old fairgrounds were used as a Union Army Civil War training camp and supply center. This area was known as Camp Curtin, named for Andrew Curtin, Governor of Pennsylvania during the Civil War. The camp played an active role in defending Harrisburg against the planned rebel invasion of the capital, which instead resulted in the battle of Gettysburg in 1863.

In the period from the 1860's through the 1920's much of the area was part of the railroad community. Due to its proximity to their work, many railroaders and their families lived in the blocks adjacent to Sixth Street. Curtin Heights, laid out from Fifth to Seventh Street and from Woodbine to Curtin Street in 1889, was long a railroad neighborhood, as the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad was located three blocks east of North Sixth Street along the vacated bed of the Old Pennsylvania Canal. Generally, most of the district's buildings were constructed in the 1880 to 1920 period although some buildings date from the 1860's.

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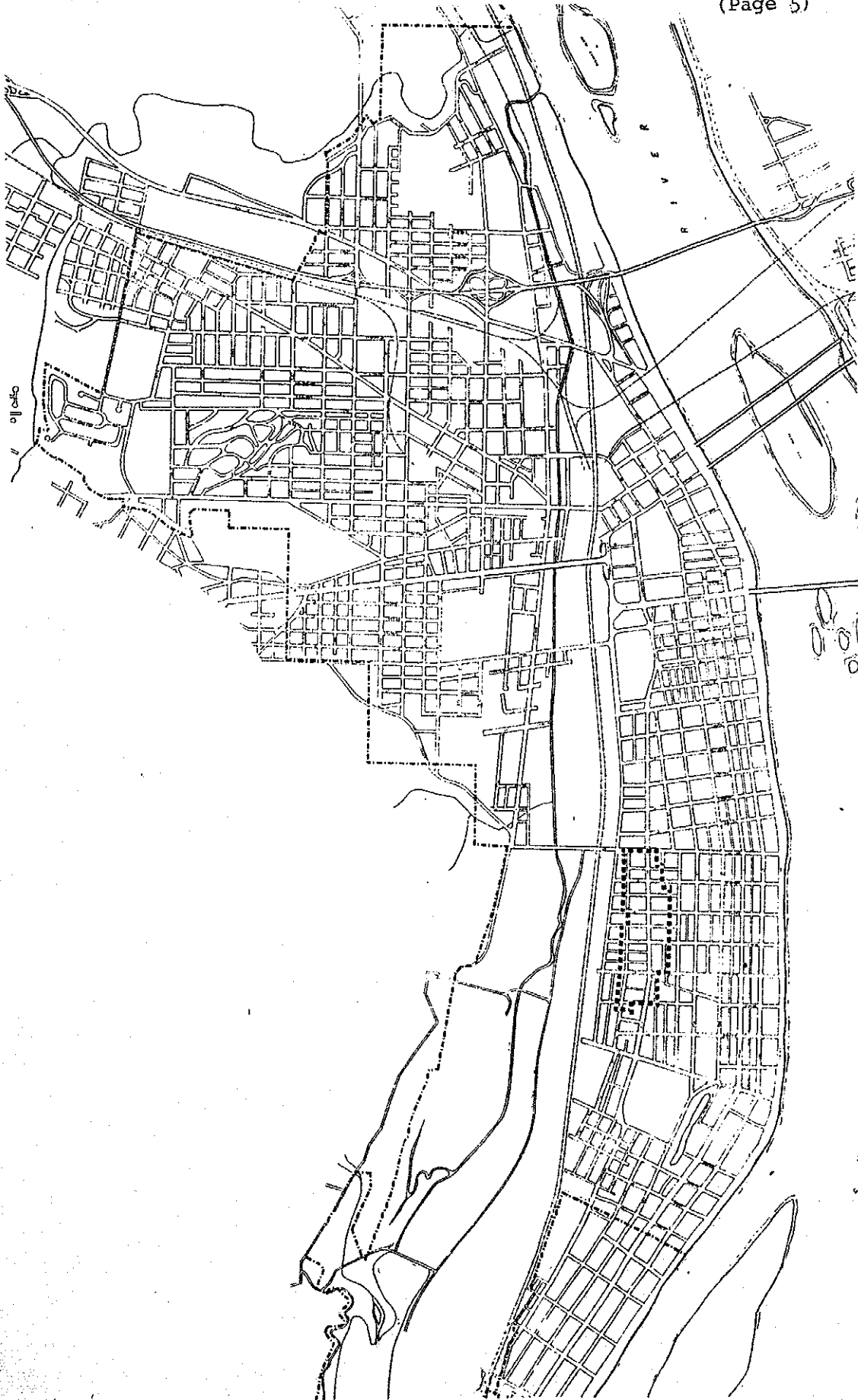
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